

IRRIGATED LANDS REGULATORY PROGRAM UPDATE REPORT FEBRUARY 2009

This month's Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program (ILRP) monthly report will provide an update on activities of the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (Central Valley Water Board) ILRP, as reported in the Central Valley Water Board's December 2008 Executive Officer's report. Future ILRP monthly reports will alternate between the Central Coast, Los Angeles, Colorado River Basin, San Diego, and Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board programs. English and Spanish translations of current and past ILRP program monthly reports can be found on the State Water Boards Irrigated Agricultural Waiver Program website:
http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/agriculture/

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CENTRAL VALLEY WATER BOARD IRRIGATED LANDS REGULATORY PROGRAM

(As reported in the Central Valley Water Board's December 2008 Executive Officer's report)

Long-term Program / Environmental Impact Report (EIR)

On 9 October, staff conducted a public meeting to establish a long-term program stakeholder advisory workgroup. The meeting was facilitated by the Regional Water Board's contractor, CSU Sacramento Center for Collaborative Policy (CCP). The workgroup's primary role will be to help staff develop alternatives and evaluation measures for a long-term program. Staff will evaluate the alternatives and select the most promising alternatives for further analysis in the EIR.

At the first workgroup meeting staff and stakeholders discussed the workgroup structure, goals, and rules. Staff and CCP have developed a workgroup charter document that contains a plan for communicating workgroup recommendations to the Regional Water Board, establishes the work group structure, and clarifies roles and responsibilities. The next advisory workgroup meeting is planned for 17 December. On 22 October, staff met with County Agricultural Commissioners from the Sacramento and San Joaquin Valley Area Groups to discuss the current and long-term irrigated lands regulatory programs. At this meeting the Agricultural Commissioners assigned delegates to attend future long-term program advisory workgroup meetings.

On 27 October, Regional Water Board staff met with representatives of the California Cattlemen's Association (CCA) to discuss whether non-irrigated grazing lands should be included in the long-term program. CCA feels that non-irrigated grazing lands should not be a part of the irrigated lands program because these lands do not have the same impacts as farmed irrigated lands and the addition would significantly increase the size and complexity of the program. However, CCA is committed to working with staff on developing non-irrigated grazing lands program alternatives if the Regional Water Board intends to include these lands in the long-term program.

The Regional Water Board's contractor, Jones and Stokes Associates (JSA) is continuing to update the ground water chapters of the Existing Conditions Report (ECR). In addition, JSA is updating the management practices section of the ECR. Information gaps that were identified during the ECR

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public comment period are being addressed. JSA is planning to finish the ECR by 31 December 2008.

Enforcement

California Water Code (CWC) Section 13267 Orders

On 8 October, 40 CWC 13267 Orders were issued to growers in Stanislaus County who were identified as not being enrolled in the ILRP. This issuance is part of staff's ongoing efforts to maximize participation in the program.

Also in October, the Executive Officer issued five Notices of Violations (NOVs) to landowners and operators in Contra Costa County for the discharge of sediment that contributed to a nuisance condition, violated water quality objectives, and occurred in violation of the conditional waiver for coalition groups. The recipients of these NOVs are required to submit a technical report within 30 days describing steps being taken to reduce the sediment load discharged from their fields.

Outreach Postcards to Growers

On 15 October, 105 postcards were mailed to growers within the legal Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta who are not currently enrolled in a coalition. The intent of the postcards is to inform growers of the ILRP and their responsibility for waste discharge from irrigated agriculture. The postcards provide a potentially more cost effective means (over 13267 Orders) to notify non-participating growers they are required to enroll in the ILRP.

Coalition Groups

California Rice Commission (CRC)

The CRC and staff are continuing to work on the Monitoring and Reporting Program (MRP). On 16 October, staff received a draft MRP Plan with updated information on pesticide usage and aquatic toxicity. Staff met with the CRC on 22 October to discuss the MRP Plan and the proposed monitoring schedule and parameters. Another meeting is scheduled for 14 November to further discuss the MRP Plan and subsequent MRP Order for the CRC.

East San Joaquin Water Quality Coalition (ESJWQC)

On 30 September, the ESJWQC submitted its management plan for exceedances in the coalition area. Staff reviewed and submitted comments to the ESJWQC on 14 October, followed by a conference call on 20 October. The ESJWQC submitted an addendum on 31 October, which included revisions to the management plan and additional required information. Staff is reviewing the information submitted and prompt completion of this revision is anticipated.

Sacramento Valley Water Quality Coalition (SVWQC)

On 30 September, staff received the SVWQC Draft Management Plan. On 22 October, staff provided comments and met with the SVWQC to discuss the management plan priorities and schedule details. The SVWQC agreed to submit a revised management plan on 1 December. On 12 September, an interim approval for 2009 was given for the SVWQC's 25 July 2008 MRP Plan. A coalition-specific order will be developed in 2009 to be effective in 2010. On 28 October, staff received the revised Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP), which was four weeks past the deadline established by the Executive Officer. The revised QAPP will be reviewed by ILRP staff and the Regional Water Board's Quality Assurance Officer, who will provide final approval of the QAPP. On 26 September, staff met with board of the Placer, Nevada, South Sutter, North Sacramento sub-watershed. Staff discussed the long-term program, management plan issues, and enforcement efforts.

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San Joaquin County and Delta Water Quality Coalition (SJCDWQC)

On 30 September, the San Joaquin County and Delta Water Quality Coalition submitted its management plan for exceedances in the coalition area. Staff is preparing comments for potential revisions. The Executive Officer approved the SJCDWQC MRP Plan on 15 September with the condition of submittal of a management plan by the previously established 30 September deadline. On 24 October, staff held a San Joaquin County and Delta Water Quality Coalition Management Plan conference call to discuss management plan development items.

Westside San Joaquin River Watershed Coalition (WSJRWC)

On 26 September, the WSJRWC re-submitted the Management Plan and Focused Watershed Improvement Plan for the Hospital and Ingram Creek Watersheds. The WSJRWC had reviewed recent comments and additions supplied to them, and made only slight changes to the dates identified in the plans for scheduled action items. The revisions were acceptable, and staff recommended that the WSJRWC submit a final version for review and approval by the Executive Officer. Final versions of the plans were submitted for approval on 23 October. Staff is preparing an approval letter for signature by the Executive Officer. On 4 November, the Executive Officer and staff attended a regular meeting of the San Joaquin Valley Drainage Authority (SJVDA) Board. A steering committee of the SJVDA oversees the Westside San Joaquin River Watershed Coalition. Potential participation of the SJVDA in the Water Board's CVSALTS Initiative and implementation of the WSJRWC management plan were discussed.

Goose Lake Coalition

On 23 October, the Goose Lake Coalition submitted a draft of the Lassen Creek Management Plan final report. Staff will provide comments to the Coalition and the final draft will be submitted by 15 November. With approval of the final report, this management plan will not require further actions by the Goose Lake Coalition.

Westlands Coalition

The MRP Plan is under senior review while staff awaits submittal of the revised and signed QAPP. Staff reviewed USGS Report 02-4286 in response to the Westlands Coalition's request to waive a management plan requirement for electrical conductivity on Panoche-Silver Creek. A formal response has been drafted and is under senior review. The Annual Monitoring Report for the 2007-2008 storm season is currently under staff review.

Southern San Joaquin Valley Water Quality Coalition (SSJWQC)

Staff has met with representatives of the Tule River and Kern River sub-watershed groups to provide them with guidance and examples to aid in the preparation/revisions of the management plans for toxicity. A format and tentative dates for meetings is being developed with the SSJWQC and its member subwatershed groups to discuss revisions to the Coalition's MRP Plan.

Data Management

Some concerns were raised by the Southern San Joaquin Valley Water Quality Coalition regarding the Coalition's ability to achieve SWAMP comparable data, and meet laboratory hold time requirements because of laboratory performance issues. In order to help the Coalition resolve these issues a meeting is being developed in which the SWAMP Quality Assurance Team from SWRCB will brief the Coalition on tools that they can use to achieve compliance. Other Coalitions will be invited to the meeting. It is anticipated that it will be held in December 2008 or January 2009 in Fresno.

Coalition/Dairy Coordination

On 28 October, staff from the Dairy Program and ILRP met with Coalition groups and the dairy industry in Modesto to discuss coordination issues. Topics included ensuring that irrigated lands were

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regulated in the appropriate program and coordinating on addressing surface water quality problems. The dairy industry and Coalitions will begin a pilot program to conduct joint outreach in a high priority watershed in the East San Joaquin Water Quality Coalition area.

Individual Dischargers

BerryBlest Farms

On 8 October, the BerryBlest Farm enrolled with a coalition group after receiving Executive Officer approval. A Notice of Termination was completed, which terminated its coverage under the Individual Conditional Waiver.

Modesto Irrigation District

Executive Officer requested a management plan from Modesto ID on 20 August to address exceedances of herbicides and physical parameters. The management plan was submitted on 18 September and is currently under review.

Turlock Irrigation District

The Turlock ID 2007/2008 Annual Monitoring Report has been reviewed and a letter of acknowledgement and recommendations is being prepared by staff.

Merced Irrigation District

The Merced ID 2007/2008 Annual Monitoring Report was reviewed and a letter of acknowledgement and recommendations was submitted by staff on 23 September 2008 and a meeting was held with Merced ID to go over ILRP staff comments on 9 September 2008. Merced Id submitted the required additional information on 3 November 2008.

Grant Management

Proposition 84

Applications for the Request for Qualifications closed on 14 October. Only one complete application was received. As specified in the RFQ, the applicant will give a presentation on 5 November that includes a proposed scope of work and answer a series of questions from Regional Water Board staff.

Proposition 50

On 24 October, staff received the San Joaquin County Resource Conservation District's grant invoice and progress report for the grant entitled Measuring the Effectiveness of Agricultural Management Practices. The invoice and progress report are under staff review.

MOU Pilot Program

The MOU Pilot Program contracts with the Agricultural Commissioners of Butte and Glenn Counties were suspended from 31 July to 15 October. A meeting scheduled 7 November in Oroville discussed integrating the pilot program work with ILRP management plans in the Central Valley.

Report to Legislature

The Legislature adopted the following language in their Supplemental Report to the Budget Act: "On or before March 30, 2009, SWRCB shall submit a report to the JLBC and to the relevant policy committees that details: (a) the precise actions the SWRCB would have to undertake to obtain a 30 percent reduction to agricultural pollution runoff in to the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and its tributary watersheds by 2012, (b) the estimated costs of those actions, and (c) which of those actions can be completed administratively and which would require legislation to implement." On 27 October, staff, met with Legislative staff to clarify what was needed in the report and discuss options for providing the required information.

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Committee Meetings

Technical Issues

On 10 and 27 October, staff participated in the ILRP Technical Issues Focus Group meeting to discuss some tools that may help Coalitions with their Management Plans. These include: Definition of terms, Frequently Asked Questions and development of performance goals.

On 4 November, the last quarterly meeting of the year was held for the Technical Issues Committee. There was a presentation by National Resource Conservation District staff in Davis, and discussions about Management Plan development and focus Group activities.